Limited Time Offer!

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Limited Time Offer!

by oonaseckar

Summary

One day only!

Will is getting used to having a werewolf boyfriend.

Experiencing a bodyswap -- waking up in Hannibal's body -- well, that's something else altogether.

Somebody should have warned him about *that.*

Chapter 1

Will wakes up in the woods. He's covered in fur, and soaked through to the hide. With a bright moon overhead.

This is not something *usual*, though. He can pretty much be excused for jumping up in alarm, panting out his panic as he jerks a suddenly lupine head about the shadowy woodsy clearing he's been lying in. He lollops up in more than a half-panic, as instinct takes over, and he rushes to lope about the grassy meadows beyond, searching for companions, looking for threats and predators, examining the territory.

Mostly, though, he's searching for explanations. The thing is, Will isn't a werewolf. Or a wolf, or anything that runs on four legs. (And for this reason, his galumphings around the perimeter of the clearing, and around the surrounding copses, is a lot less than graceful. He falls over twice, before he gets even slightly acclimatized to four paws instead of two human feet, to hips in the wrong place and reversed knee joints.)

Because that's what he is. He's *human*.

Will is human, with a werewolf boyfriend. A boyfriend who has not bitten him, has not changed him. Not that Will can remember, and he thinks he *would remember*. Who is an adorable sweetheart, barring some issues with the moon and monthly grumps when his hormones are all haywire and emotional.

At least, Hannibal hasn't changed him as far as he's aware. That's something that doesn't slip the memory, not ever.

And what the hell is he doing out in the woods, anyhow? Even if he somehow has been infected with werewolfness – lycanthropy, that's it, that's what he means – then how did he get here? If he's waking up anywhere, then it should be at home. In his bed. Furry and clawed and fangy, but still between his own familiar sheets, that smell of lavender and pine and which he bought at half-price offer at a very mod and stylish little website that was recommended on-

Not relevant. Will comes to a staggering halt, right in the middle of the clearing. He's not dreaming this. He *ought* to be, but it's going on too long, it's too real. The grass is too wet beneath his feet. Everything is too bright and clear for a dream, even more bright and clear than usual, even in the dark, even in the middle of the night. There's only the light of the moon on the grass and the trees and on him, but it seems so much brighter than usual. That's werewolf senses for you, abnormally sharp and clear, amplified.

Chapter 2

(He's not a wolf, though. As he keeps mentally pointing out to himself, desperate for it to make a difference.)

But after the initial panic, he's comparatively calm. The moon shines down on him, luminous and solemn, as he thinks, *well, if this thing is really real, then what do I do about it?*

It's not as if he doesn't have anyone to consult. He has a renowned expert on the subject, in fact. (He has a whole packful of informed experts, if he counts Hannibal's pack, as well as Hannibal.) So he shakes himself, and pants as slowly as he can manage it, for a few minutes, to calm himself down as best he can. (It's what he'd do if he was still human-shaped, the way he ought to be: so he does it now, in the hopes that it'll have something of the same effect it would if he was deep breathing to stave off a panic attack.)

fragile and ephemeral

Chapter Notes

Chapter title from Agustina Bazterrica's exquisite and appropriate 'Tender Is The Flesh'.

And then he runs, loping more awkward and ungainly than he's ever seen any true wolf, ever. And he's seen a few, what with all the pack runs he's attended, the number of times he's seen a soft out-of-shape human body darken and stretch and twist into something scary and seductive and, well, furry. What with having a werewolf lover, God damn it. But it's not his natural shape, and he does his best, and at least makes better time than he ever could in his normal body. Heading for home – his home – and if that fails, for Hannibal's house.

But this is actually Hannibal's body, now, that his eyes, or wolf eyes that he's temporarily in possession of, look out from: and if Hannibal has been translocated into his, then Will's nice safe warm bed is where he should be. And probably having a much better night's sleep than Will, although he could not possibly be experiencing a worse one – it's not possible. No-one has ever slept worse than this. He runs through the glittering moonlight, and it seems to speak to him, through grassy glades and light woodland, into nicely-tended farmland and then suburban and urban areas, until he comes to his own apartment.

And if a wolf could cry, then he might cry with relief. His heart pounds so hard with it, he trembles. And he pads around the building to the back, where there's a fire escape up to the balcony of his apartment, and access is nice and easy. (Which is partly why he pays such high insurance premiums. That, and the fact that he lives in a werewolf-infested city, and people are still stupidly prejudiced. Will a werewolf bite you? Maybe, if it's crazy. So may a crazy human.)

Leaping up the escape and onto the balcony isn't quite as easy for him, as it would be for a true werewolf, easy and sure in its haunch and heft and muscle, graceful in a way someone operating equipment at one remove cannot possibly be. But it's doable, even though he slips: with a wolf's instinct, borrowed if not innate, he manages to regain his footing and keep on course, finally landing and pressing up against the reinforced glass doors – the glass doors of his own bedroom. He's heavy enough, muscular enough as a wolf that he could break them, if he chose. But he doesn't.

For one, they're his *own doors,* to his own room and apartment, and he likes them pretty much the way they are, thanks. And also, he's *in* there, so there's no need.

Oh dear, it's freaky. It's enough to give him a panic attack all over again. Thing is, he can see in there, he can see that it's *him*. Lying asleep amongst ruffled and tangled sheets, half-aslant laid on the bed at a crossways angle, with his eyes closed and his mouth open wide. (Snoring. Although he doesn't snore – whatever Hannibal says.)

Chapter 4

So he's in there, and yet also, he's out here. Which makes him stand, and shiver, for a moment. Before he applies logic, since it's the only tool he's got to work with, seeing as how, hey, currently *no opposable thumbs.* He's pretty damn certain, applying *cogito ergo sum*, that he's here, thinking, in a furry pelt. And therefore, he's *here*, to exist, to think. And therefore... even though the body lying on the bed inside his bedroom looks an awful lot like the body he's more used to living in himself, that doesn't necessarily mean a thing. After all, he's out here in a strange body –- or, more accurately, in a body he's used to thinking of as belonging to someone very near, very dear to him. And therefore, surely just because there's a body lying on the bed in his bedroom –- the body that belongs to him, just as much as the bed and the room themselves –- that's no reason to assume that the body's current inhabitant is his own true self. And that whoever he is, thinking away here in a wolfy pelt and claws, is some crazy person who's lost his mind.

It makes him feel far too schizophrenic, for a start. He's either out here, or in there, one or the other. Not *both*. And since he is, indubitably, as far as his lupine brain can make out, then... he's out here. And that's enough thinking. Time for some action, so he acts. Leaning –- hard, with all the considerable weight of a full-grown werewolf -- against the glass doors, he begins to whine and to moan and –- since he doesn't get an immediate reaction –- to yip, to grumble, to *howl*, frankly. It's an infallible strategy. He can only carry on in this way for so long before the body on the bed –- which is breathing steadily, because Will can see, from here, its chest rise and fall, even though the face is turned away –- is forced to respond. Is forced to *wake up,* and forced, then, to respond.

Chapter 5

He could time himself, but unfortunately –- unless you count an unaccustomed wolf pelt –- he's stark naked. No phone, no watch. But it might be one full minute, or perhaps two, or maybe at a stretch three, before the figure lying prone and unresponsive inside moves. And decides that *wakey-wakey,* maybe it's time to get with the program, and pay attention to whatever the hell's going on outside the windows.

Will isn't wrong, though, that's the thing. By no means. Of course, when the lax and slumped body stiffens, tautens, flexes muscle amongst the rumpled sheets and duvet, it's himself. *Not* himself. God, this is getting extremely confusing.

But the whole story's told, just the same, when his body sits up abruptly. Will's body, his own, his personal vehicle for getting around in, *paws off* all intruders! Even if they're his beloved boyfriend. He watches himself look out the window and stare at -- at the wolf without -- with confusion and disbelief. Transparently, immediately obvious, they require no explanation. It helps, though, just the same, when Will's hands go to Will's body. Exploring. They touch tentatively for the first moment, and then skim over thigh and bicep and chest, over smooth skin and taut nipple. There's disbelief writ loud on that pretty, gentle face. (It's confusing, too, that outsider's view of his own form. It's a bit disorientating. To have that outside perspective that isn't, for once, switched around widdershins by a mirror, nor set off at third-hand in a photo. It's the way that other people must see him, and it's unsettling.

He hadn't known his habitual expression was so vulnerable, so open. (He thinks of himself as a cynical operator, as someone perhaps even a little hardened. Likely to respond with a lack of surprise, to the depths of human evil he witnesses on the job. He knows that the world is a big bad dangerous place, that it takes advantage of the innocent, scuffs most everybody up at some point, before spitting them back out. That you might as well *expect* to get bruised up some, along the way.

That's not the face the world sees, though. It's a *surprised bunny* façade that he habitually presents to all and sundry. *Disconcerting*. He finds it hard to believe. But there, on the other hand, is the evidence, right there in front of him.)

Chapter 6

And that evidence, at this moment, is getting the message. Even though its mouth has dropped open like it's not only trying to catch flies, but maybe a small prehistoric woolly mammoth into the bargain. Will can tell, by the look of resolve on his own face –- the acceptance that it doesn't damn well matter whether he can work out what's going on. The thing that matters is that there's an emergency situation, and it needs *dealing with.*

If there's an emergency, then as the alpha of his pack, Hannibal knows that it's all on him to deal with it. It's right there in the job description, in fact: deal with crises and mop up the fallout.

At least, that's what's going on, as long as it really is Hannibal in there. Which Will is pretty sure of. *Reasonably* sure of. It's the only thing that makes sense. Who else is it going to be, barring his significant other? If this whole body-switching thing is more than two-way –- if there's a third or, Christ, a fourth body and person involved –- then he's officially throwing up his hands and declaring that he needs extra brain power brought in, just to follow the convolutions of who's borrowed whose usual face and ass.

Anyhow. If it was Alana, she'd be up and kicking ass *already*.

Chapter 7

(Maybe he's acting, here, as if this whole thing is normal and unsurprising. It isn't. Just because his lover is a supernatural creature, doesn't make it an everyday event to wake up looking out of someone else's eyes. Even that same supernatural creature's. Will just has an awful lot of *sang froid,* okay? Perhaps even a practically supernatural amount. Or at least, he can fake it pretty well.)

But still, no response could be quick enough to satisfy him, not now, with this. And now, Hannibal –- it's *got* to be Hannibal –- stares through the glass and eyeballs him, all sleep wiped abruptly from his clear bright eyes. (Will's eyes, that Hannibal himself likes so much, thinks so pretty.) Will abandons all pretense of patient pleading. Instead, he leaps off his four paws, bodily, and throws himself against the toughened glass of the doors. It seems like the way to get the message across, even though this other self who is Hannibal is standing, coming towards the doors.

It gets Hannibal moving quicker. That means it does the job it was intended for. And Hannibal doesn't hesitate, either, when he unlocks the door. No understandable wary native caution, no pause for thought and assessment before he opens up and lets in a theoretically unknown intruder.

But that's the alpha psychology for you. Confidence that isn't unwarranted or overweening, because it's based on knowledge, experience and certainty –- certainty that an alpha can deal with any challenge, neutralize a proffered threat, can fight off an invading army single-handed if necessary, or with not much more assistance. (Except that under these extraordinary and exceptional circumstances, in fact it's confidence that is precisely unwarranted, overweening –- because it's ungrounded. Because Hannibal is still Hannibal, in there, *if* it's Hannibal in there. But outwardly, that's not Hannibal. It's Will, and Will's fragile, human body.

And Will is really, sincerely hoping that Hannibal takes extra good care of it, for the duration of this little tenancy problem that they're experiencing.

Chapter 8

But now, now, Hannibal-is-it-Hannibal clicks the door open sideways, and Will doesn't need more invitation than that. He's inside the room inside of no seconds at all, *lickety-split,* job done. And he's damp and cold, even through the pelt it's so damn cold outside. And also frustrated and bewildered and more than a little mad, even if he isn't quite sure at what or at whom. That's his reasoning and justification –- or it would be, if he was at all exercising reasoning and justification –- for taking a couple of great long lopes over the carpet, before segueing into a flying leap onto the bed. (It's *his* bed, after all, fuck it.)

And Hannibal –- in his voice, with his face, but yeah, he's pretty sure it's Hannibal –- has a response to that. Coming from a supernatural creature –- a wolf –- a werewolf, for God's sake –- you wouldn't really expect it to be along the lines of, "Oh my God! Not on the bed! I mean it, Will. Not on the bed!"

It's exactly what Will's mom would say, if she were here now, and God forbid any such eventuality. And although it is, truly, a little surprising coming out of a werewolf's mouth, it's... well, in fact, not quite completely uncharacteristic, not where Hannibal is concerned.

He has high standards, and he applies them. (He's particular about soap powder brands. He has opinions about silverware and flower-arranging, too.) it actually helps, a little, to set Will at ease, now. Because a) that guy with *his* face knows who Will is, and knows who really owns those pretty hazel eyes. And also b), anyone who considers themselves to be entitled to be that darned picky and bossy about Will's bedsheets and duvet is almost certainly Hannibal. Unless it's his *mom* borrowing his body, in which case Will is officially checking out of life through embarrassment. (Especially if she's stumbled over his porn stash.)

Chapter 9

So he's fairly relieved to hear this pissy, prissy response to his search –- completely understandable –- for a bit of warmth and comfort. But just the same, just because he feels some measure of relief, doesn't at all mean that he has any intention of co-operating, of--.

“Get your goddamn hide off of those clean sheets this minute, Will! Do you think I'm playing around? I assure you, I'm not playing around!” Yeah, that's Hannibal all right. And Will gives the wolf equivalent of a grin, sharky and sarcastic, slavering and slobbering a little at the jaws, to let his guy know exactly what his opinion is of his *manly alpha authority.*

(In fact, normally he does respect Hannibal's authority, and normally it's pretty impressive. But 'normally' doesn't describe any kind of a day that's like today, what with the whole bodyswap situation, and being a werewolf, and waking up somewhere other than in his own bed. His *bed*, that's the important point. This bed is *his* bed, and he ain't moving. And just to make his point more amply, he stretches out a whole lot more luxuriantly, and maybe even wriggles a bit into the coverlet, more than he needs to.

It seems to give Hannibal the general idea, at least. In any case, he sighs, and says, “Fine, then. *Your* sheets, *your* laundry, your *funeral*. Although you can bet your suddenly furry ass that this issue is going to be thoroughly and rapidly revisited, when this whole situation gets resolved and we know what the hell's going on.” And that, yeah *that*, is the note of alpha authority, and every inch of Will's temporarily lupine body wants to respond to it as hormonally programmed. But he resists, and sprawls some more, just on principle. Because he's *human*, not wolf, not at all. No matter how things appear currently. And human Will only ever cedes Hannibal the tiniest little bit of authority. And that mostly in bed, where it's the most fun.

Chapter 10

Hannibal just ignores his insubordination, though. Maybe on principle, and maybe because his mind's wandered away to more urgent considerations. Clearly it has, judging by the way his hand smooths down over his hips, and he looks down at what actually isn't his own body. His eyes skim fretfully over chest and six-pack and crotch and thighs, calves, bare feet. Will normally sleeps in a clean pair of jogging pants, and that's all. Tonight was no exception. And now Hannibal is appreciating, by eye and by touch, the end result of a fair few hours spent in the gym and on the track. He's sliding one hand over 'his' belly, the other scratching idly, meditatively at his bicep, flicking over one nipple taut with the breeze from the opened door...

“Do you mind?” Will rather feels like saying. 'Can you hold off until I'm back *in* there, before you start paying that quite nice physique that level of attention?' It's not that he grudges Hannibal a bit of curious exploration: it's just that they have *other things to concern them* right now. Plus Hannibal ought to know his body from soup to nuts and arse to tit, considering how thoroughly he's explored it before this night. That's when Will has been in his own bod, and it's been a third person exploration.

But he doesn't 'say' anything, as such. Just yips a little, which sounds rather more mournful and rather less snarky than he'd intended. And he wonders if that's how it works for Hannibal too, and if all the times that he's been 'serenaded' at the full of the moon, with Hannibal out there howling soulfully or yipping with a gentle wistfulness, he was actually saying, 'Yo, babe, get your ass out here! Come run and hang out with me! Stop watching TV and playing video games, unless you want an ass that's big enough to obscure the moon!'

Chapter 11

“Fine, fine,” Hannibal grumbles a bit irritably. He gives one last prod to the ass that doesn't in fact belong to him, and ought to be treated with a bit more respect, thank you. But at least he seems to be able to translate what Will is trying to get at quite well. Which isn't that surprising when you think about it. He transfers his attention to Will instead, where he's lying on the bed, and pulls an irritable face at him. (And Will notes how gormless he himself apparently looks, when he pulls that particular face. He immediately resolves never to reproduce that particular expression, ever, under any circumstances.) But that expression softens a bit anyhow, as Hannibal looks at Will sprawled out in his own wolf form there on the bed. He's damp, and not yet warmed up, and doubtless looking a little woebegone and sorry for himself. “Honey, he says, with a quick grin flashing over that face. “Make allowances – this is *almost* as weird for me as it is for you. I woke up three minutes ago in your apartment, and in your body –- make some allowances for me being a little disoriented.” And he hesitates a moment. “Because –- it *is* in you in there, isn't it? No,” he adds, reasoning it out all by himself, since he's not liable currently to get a lot of assistance from Will, “it *has* to be, it's the only reasonable thing. I'm here, in your body, and you're in my wolf form, any other explanation would be needlessly complex and incredibly irritating. Occam's Razor, darling.” Then he gives a look Will's way, that is more vulnerably anxious than anything that Will has ever seen in Hannibal's range of expressions. He's seen Hannibal tough, cynical, funny. But not really *vulnerable*. Perhaps his face has difficulty expressing it. Hannibal, affectionate but a little stingy about showing it sometimes, wary of showing weakness as any Alpha must be.

“But I can't smell your scent on you, not the way I normally would,” he murmurs, sniffing the air a little. “I can't smell a damn thing.”

Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

You say he's down the well, Lassie?!!!???

Oh, dear. Will gives a little wolfy moan –- because, well, what an idiot his Hannibal is being. But it only makes Hannibal laugh, throwing his head back. His dark hair -- *Will's* dark hair -- that's a little too long right now, brushes against his bare shoulders as he does so. "I know, I know," he agrees. Will must have been plenty obvious about what he thought on the subject, even without words to get the message across. "It's effectively my body -- on loan, at least -- what am I going to smell on me except *me*, right?" he clarifies. "But still, you must admit that it's confusing, my love, not so?" he argues. And he drops to sit on the bed beside Will, and digs his hand into the scruff of fur around his own wolf's neck. For a new, overwhelming and pretty disorienting experience, the feeling of being a wolf and also getting petted by someone who's normally about half wolf himself, is pretty spectacular, actually. Unsurprisingly, it seems like Hannibal knows and can hit every spot that needs a tight muscle loosened, every nerve ending that's been aching after his frantically worried run out here from the forest, every tuft of hair that's had the nap blown uncomfortably the wrong way. And he's pretty adept at using Will's own hands, to give him a quick pat and massage that has him less tense and more relaxed inside of five minutes.

"I guess you're the one who's had a really rough night, though, sweetheart," Hannibal says sympathetically, scritching at wolfy ears and hmmm'ing along to Will's sighing moan. "That moon out there is pretty big and close to full: judging from the state of you I'm guessing that it called you out there into the rain, and the wolf just couldn't help but answer the call?"

Not exactly, Will wants to answer: *in fact, I woke up already out there, already wolf, and what the heck is going on here any way? This isn't normal! We've had a few minutes to recover, we've regrouped: now let's work out what's happening here!* He sets his head back, cocking his wolf-muzzle up to look into those hazel eyes that aren't exactly Hannibal's, and whines hard.

And Hannibal examines his face and eyes carefully, like he's analyzing and interpreting based on the available information, and he nods, brisk. "Let's get on with this, right?" he diagnoses, ceasing to mangle his own wolf's damply alert ears, even if it makes Will sigh like a gale and crane his muzzle over, clacking his jaws a couple of times wistfully at the cessation of petting. "You're right, darling. There's no point just lounging around here, both busy being amazed and staring at ourselves in the mirror. Where's disbelief going to get us? Nowhere. Unless we're both having a really weird dream, this is real. We might as well deal with it."

Chapter 13

And even if he isn't too happy about the withdrawal of petting, Will can at least get behind this approach. He can't quite figure out what's going on with his rear end, though –- the wiggling and feathery sensation of air resistance. Until Hannibal claps a hand over his mouth, to stifle a laugh. Then raises a reproving eyebrow, and says to him –- a bit sharply -- "Oh, Will. You're letting the side down, here. I know you're only borrowing my wolf-body temporarily, but even so. When was the last time you saw me wagging my tail like a *dog*?"

And Will realizes what it is that his rear half is up to, and he puts a stop to it, pretty damn quick. Sometime *never*, is the accurate answer to Hannibal's question, he knows quite well. He only feels a bit embarrassed, though. But a bit more concerned, at Hannibal's next observation. "But you know, my love, it would be a lot easier for us to discuss the whole thing with you in human form. Even if it's *my* human form. Come on now, change for me. Let's talk this over properly, without me having to interpret every whine and snuffle."

And he stops talking, and waits for a minute, sitting there and looking down at Will sprawled out, fur and jaws and claws, on a nice cashmere coverlet.

Well. It's not like Will *wouldn't* co-operate, if he had the first idea how to go about doing that. And he whines loud and helpless, the only way he has available to him of saying exactly that. Hannibal draws his eyebrows together, looking a little disbelieving, and then says, "Really? You're having trouble?"

And well, he might be having trouble. If he even had any idea of how to begin to shift-shape in the first place. What, is this kind of thing supposed to come *naturally*? He slaps paws –- how strange to have paws, rough pads and warm fur and sharp claws -– over his snout and eyes, closed like any shamed hound. Whining again. (He has a snout. It's ridiculous. A *snout*.)

Chapter 14

And what does that bring on, obviously, but maybe the oddest forty minutes or so in Will's life so far, since he started dating a werewolf. Hannibal begins to try to tutor him into working out how to initiate the change. And talking to him at the same time, talking him through it and talking to him about other things. And all of it in Will's own voice, which is as odd to hear as any recording of your own voice usually is.

First he lies down on the bedroom carpet, next to Will, and gets Will to copy him as best he can, as he goes through the motions he'd expect from a wolf shifting back into human form. Legs contracting and bending a little as the haunches shorten, swift little whimpers as the skin tautens with the withdrawal of fur back into every follicle. Grunts, as the skull foreshortens, pulling faces as the jaw relocates and clicks into place, the nose withers away into a relative stump. And a big, exaggerated sigh of exhaustion and relaxation, as evidently –- judging by the way he slumps into a semi-nude heap on the rug –- Hannibal mimics how *he* feels, and his position, when he transitions from wolf-form to man-form.

And –- maybe a little bit in order to humor him –- Will follows along with the motions, spread out down on the floor beside the bed, just like his werewolf lover. How ridiculous, the pair of them. "What, really, nothing?" Hannibal asks now, turning his head to the side to stare at Will. Who is flopped out in mimicry of him, but in resolutely lupine, shaggily furry and be-clawed form. "No... twinges, no funny feeling in your bones, no fire over your skin like it'll just burn itself off if it doesn't take the fur off your hide?"

It's interesting, in a way. It's never occurred to Will to ask Hannibal about what the experience of changing from man to wolf, and back again, is like subjectively, rather than observed from the outside as he's done at wolf-pack runs, moon-time. Although they've only been dating for a little over three months, now, so he guesses that really they just haven't had time to get to it.

Chapter 15

In any case, however it feels, he's not feeling it. He sighs, and raises his paws up to flop them back down again. He guesses that Hannibal gets the general idea. *He* sighs, too.

He's not done, though, not beaten at all. (It's still the middle of the night. Will isn't precisely tired –- there's a weird silvery electric energy he can feel, coursing around every meridian and chakra and acupuncture point in his body. Now, after the first shock, only now is he really becoming aware of it. But somehow, even without fatigue, he's still a little dopey and sleepy. He figures it 's probably because it's the middle of the night. If he had the words, he'd probably suggest having a nap for an hour or two, before getting up at a more civilized hour to deal with their little body-swap problem. He was panicked and anguished and seized with the urgency of it all when he arrived and bashed himself against his own windows in the middle of the night, yes. But now he's with Hannibal.

He's with Hannibal, and they still seem to be facing a pretty intractable problem. Because if a *true* werewolf doesn't know how to teach him to change his form back to human, then how are they ever going to properly discuss what's happened? And more than that, there's the primary issue itself –- that he's in Hannibal's body, and Hannibal's in his, and it's... ridiculous, and uncomfortable, and... interesting. Yes, interesting. But he can't persuade himself to worry too much about it, not now he's with Hannibal, who's playfully goading him into getting up on his hind legs and dancing around –- and God, what an affront to his dignity, Hannibal himself would never do it. But, with a little whine of protest, Will does it to please Hannibal. He's found himself doing a lot of things to please Hannibal, these last months.

No, Hannibal's not done. Mimicry hasn't got them anywhere, so he starts on mystic and psychological methods instead. He sits cross-legged down against the bed –- the warm, soft bed, that looks so very comfortable –- and begins all kinds of old mysterious chants. These are apparently part of the lupine folklore and occult knowledge of his pack. Will has never heard of them before, nor heard anything like them, but then there's only so much you learn about somebody in four months of dating. Really they've just been circling around each other up until now, shyly moving in a little closer here and there. It has involved allowing the odd demonstration of affection and liking, but both have been still a little guarded with their hearts. Oh, they've slept together all right -– Hannibal's even taken him along with the pack to a run at the pack's country farm. But that's not the same thing as involving one's heart, which might not be involved at all.

Chapter 16

And the chants, or mantras, or whatever they are, are quite interesting. At first. Will doesn't attempt them, not with his temporarily wolfish throat. But he whiffles and murmurs along a little, little whines and wolfy grumbles, as Hannibal closes his eyes, hands on his knees. Sonorously he intones rather pretty nonsense words that sound like poetry or song, delivered very slowly. Every so often he prods at Will's furry shoulder, as if to say, *doing any good yet?* Or, *do you feel anything?* Finally he does actually hiss, "Will, for Christ's sake pay attention. I know you can't actually mouth the words, currently, but you can concentrate on the sounds. If you actually want it to have any effect. Are you concentrating?"

To that, Will flumps down completely flat on the carpet and sighs heavily, then flops his paws over his eyes. It appears to adequately get the message across: that this process is a) tedious and b) not noticeably working.

Hannibal sighs too, and pets him behind the ears. If Will had had any conception of how pleasant it is to have your ears petted, back when he was human and Hannibal was occasionally, in moon-mad moments, in wolf-form, then he'd have petted his furry boyfriend an awful lot more often. Being petted is *great*. "I know, honey," Hannibal says, comforting as he can make it. "This isn't working, it's driving you crazy, it's driving me crazy... Maybe we should go out hunting."

Chapter 17

And Will makes an interrogatory noise that is completely ludicrous, coming from the mouth of a wolf. Hannibal laughs, hearing it, and leans back against the bed. He rests his hand over Will's snout –- well, more accurately, his *own* snout –- and sighs. “Perhaps –- I don't know. It must be a spell, don't you think so? I hardly see how a reversal and exchange of bodies can suggest anything else. And spells suggest witches. Although I've had precious little dealings with any such, and would have to root around amongst the friends and contacts of the pack, to see if any know someone who could advise us. Perhaps I should call them, now, see if any of them can come up with a name, someone we can call in.”

There's a little whine, that emanates from the temporarily lupine throat of Will, at this suggestion. Perhaps it's a good idea. But on the other hand, it's far beyond late, and he's already gone to bed this evening, quite tired enough, as a human male. And then woken, wet and cold and befurred and far, far from home, in a body so very strange and unlike his own. He's run through the night to find his home, and found his lover too, also mysteriously and fearfully changed. Well, changed into a semblance of Will himself, at least. Some might account that fearful and wonderful. The new lab-tech at school would be impressed, at least.

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